

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

The claims are 1-9, 11-15 and 17. Claims 1-5, (and presumably claim 7), 15 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Taylor et al. U.S. Patent No. 3,901,425* in view of *Jeannette U.S. Patent No. 3,384,778*, *Ueyama et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,102,483*, and *Bryce et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,187,411*. The remaining claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Taylor et al.*, *Jeannette*, *Ueyama et al.*, *Bryce et al.*, and further in view of *Tomiyasu et al. U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0150883* (claim 6), *Parmelee et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,731,518* (claims 8 and 9), *Strybel U.S. Patent No. 4,458,719* (claims 11 and 12), *Huisman et al. U.S. Patent No. 7,165,707* (claim 13), or *Savard et al. U.S. Patent No. 2,964,612* (claim 14).

This rejection is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is expressly requested.

Contrary to the Examiner's position, it is respectfully submitted that *Taylor et al.* fails to disclose or suggest a buffer device for a welding wire as recited in Applicants' claims

1 and 15. Rather, *Taylor et al.* simply shows a wire moving apparatus for moving a welding wire. Reference number 16 of *Taylor et al.* indicates a flexible cable assembly which is arranged between the wire moving apparatus 10 and the portable gun assembly 18. The wire moving apparatus according to *Taylor et al.* is designed to enable the movement of the welding wire efficiently through the flexible cable over longer distances and to substantially reduce the sliding friction and the possibility of stretching, buckling or "bird-nesting," especially during start up procedures. During the welding process, the welding wire should be moved at a constant velocity. The flexible cable assembly and the hollow liner 98 within the rotating sheath 96 of *Taylor et al.* only compensates movements of the welding gun during the welding process.

Moreover, as correctly noted by the Examiner, *Taylor et al.* fails to disclose or suggest the wire core with its other end being freely movable or a wire guide hose extending in a spiral shape manner. Although the Examiner relies on the secondary references to *Jeannette* and *Ueyama et al.* as disclosing these features, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's position is unfounded.

*Jeannette* describes an apparatus for striking an arc of a welding apparatus without showing a buffer device for the welding wire which buffers small amounts of welding wire during a reversal of the direction of conveyance of the welding wire. *Jeannette* fails to disclose or suggest a reversal of the direction of conveyance of the welding wire. Rather, *Jeannette* describes only the process for touch starting of an electric arc using a consumable electrode. When the electrode touches the workpiece a current is set up from the welding power source and a driving member which is attached to the guide member is actuated to retract the guide member rapidly through a short distance.

It is respectfully submitted that the retracting member described in *Jeannette* has nothing to do with a wire buffer storage as recited in Applicants' claims and that a person skilled in the art would not even consider *Jeannette* in solving the problem to which Applicants' buffer device and welding plant including same, is directed, namely to provide a buffer device for a welding wire which is constructed in a very simple and compact manner. Even if *Jeannette* would be considered by a person skilled in the art, it is respectfully submitted that only a wire core with a freely moveable end is disclosed in *Jeannette* without any context to a wire buffer storage and that there would

be no reason to modify *Taylor et al.* as suggested by the Examiner from anything taught in *Jeannette*.

Moreover, contrary to the Examiner's position, it is respectfully submitted that *Ueyama et al.* fails to disclose or suggest a wire guide hose for the movement of a wire core in it which is arranged in a helic-shaped or spiral-shaped manner as recited in Applicants' claims. FIGS. 18 and 19 of *Ueyama et al.* show the welding wire (reference number 48) within the wire guide tube 42 in a curved state. The welding wire itself and not the wire guide hose is fed in a spiral fashion along the inner surface of the wire guide bore 34. See column 4, lines 22-25 of *Ueyama et al.* The welding wire is fed within the wire guide in an uncontrolled manner increasing the buckling risk, especially of welding wires made of soft materials.

Contrary to the construction of *Ueyama et al.*, Applicants' buffer device as recited in the claims has the wire guide hose extending in a helic-shaped or spiral-shaped manner. This course of the welding guide hose 38 constitutes the preferred course for the wire core within the wire guide hose. The helic-shaped or spiral-shaped course of the wire guide hose 38 allows the wire

core to be moved in a smooth manner without the risk of buckling.

*Bryce et al.*, also relied on by the Examiner with respect to claims 1 and 15, simply shows an apparatus for consumable electrode inert gas shielded metal arc welding including a welding torch 1 through which a welding electrode in the form of a copper plated steel welding wire 2 is fed from the storage wheel 3 via flexible guide tube 4. Coupled to the wire feed tube 4 just upstream of the welding torch 1 is a module 12 for use in monitoring the stick-out distance 11 of the wire tube beyond the tip 10 of the torch 1. It is respectfully submitted that there is nothing in *Bryce et al.* that would lead one skilled in the art to modify *Taylor et al.* so as to provide a buffer device as recited in Applicants' claims.

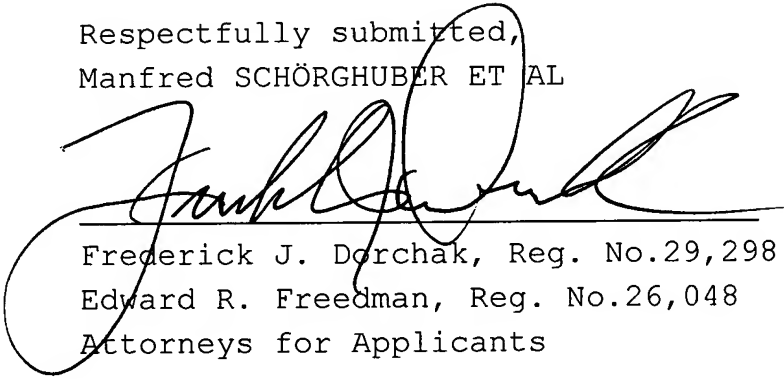
The remaining references to *Tomiyasu et al.*, *Parmelee et al.*, *Strybel*, *Huismann et al.* and *Savard et al.* have been considered but are believed to be no more relevant. None of these references discloses or suggests a buffer device or a welding plant containing same having the structure set forth in Applicants' claims or the benefits achieved by that structure.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 15, together with claims 2-9, 11-14 and 17 which depend directly or indirectly on claim 1, are patentable over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,  
Manfred SCHÖRGHUBER ET AL

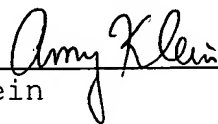
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